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ABSTRACT

The U.S. agricultural labor market is already, in many respects, a binational one, and it will become increasingly one in which workers who are born in Mexico will follow a variety of worklife trajectories that take them back and forth between both countries. Recognition of this reality has important implications for policy development and program planning. For example, improved research, program redesign, and innovation, coupled with a commitment to binational collaboration can give rise to more effective and cost-effective interventions that will improve the employment security and economic well-being of migrant and seasonal farm workers, especially teenage farm workers. Four broad areas of initiatives where action is needed as part of recognizing and responding to the current reality of a binational agricultural workforce can be recommended: immigrant policy, migrant education, farm worker employment training, and labor law enforcement. Several issues and options should be explored in order to improve transnational migrant teenagers' workforce security: (1) binational eligibility for unemployment insurance; (2) binational strategies to deter the employment of very young teenagers in the US farm labor force; (3) skills development programs to develop basic and transferrable skills for transnational migrant farm workers; (4) formation of a Binational Collaborative to inform transnational migrants about US labor law; and (5) education and employment training components in efforts to link remittances and public investment in rural development in migrant-sending areas. (Contains 31 footnotes.) (KC)

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by
Edward Kissam, Jo Ann Intili and Anna Garcia

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Introduction

In this paper, we argue that the U.S. agricultural labor market is already, in many respects, a binational one and that it will become increasingly one in which workers who are born in Mexico will follow a variety of worklife trajectories which take them back and forth between both countries.[1] We then examine what this recognition implies for policy development and program planning.

We focus on the sub-population of teenage farmworkers as a case in point and argue that improved research, program redesign and innovation, coupled with a commitment to binational collaboration can give rise to more effective and cost-effective interventions which will improve the employment security and economic well-being of migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW's).

The establishment of a U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission charged with addressing Mexico-US migration issues both in the short-term and over the long run is an important step in forging effective policy and programmatic responses to the dramatic changes in the North American regional labor market in a post-NAFTA era. Yet much work needs to be done to understand the dynamic interactions among these two closely-linked but partially-independent labor markets. With better understanding of the dynamics of this labor market it should be possible to develop more effective and cost-effective strategies for workforce development. However, even with our current state of knowledge, there is a urgent need to reassess and redesign federal and state strategies for assuring the employment security of migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW's).

Limitations of our Current Understanding of the U.S. Farm Labor Force

Ideally, national, regional, state, and local efforts to improve the economic security of U.S. farmworkers should be empirically well grounded. However, the current foundation for policy development and program design is both conceptually shaky and riddled with gaps in areas where insights are critical if human capital development is to be effective (e.g. for example in understanding of the unique educational barriers faced by the children of MSFW's, understanding the processes through which MSFW dependents develop career/worklife aspirations, how these career perspectives differ from those of

[1] An increasing number of U.S. farmworkers are of Guatemalan origin but we focus here on workers of Mexican origin as the U.S.-Mexico policy and program connection are currently the strongest ones.

transnational migrants, and understanding the actual career trajectories of various sub-populations of MSFW's and their dependents).

Some of the most serious barriers to effective program planning, policy development, program implementation, and labor law enforcement stem from the persistence of pictures of the farm labor scene as it was almost three decades ago—in the mid-1960's when social programs targeted to migrant and seasonal farmworkers were first developed as part of the national "War on Poverty". The images, ideas, and mental models underlying these program designs were valid and valuable when they first were developed; but much has changed over the years and there has not been a robust ongoing program of research adequate to guide systematic program design.[2]

Throughout the post-World War II era, even when there has been an episodic resurgence of interest in farmworkers, formal research and ongoing data collection providing information on the U.S. farm labor force have been oriented primarily toward answering quite narrowly-defined research questions posed by Congress or required to fulfill federal agencies' administrative needs (e.g. funding allocations). While researchers have, from time to time, on their own initiative usefully expanded the scope of inquiry beyond agency-mandated questions, there has never been a structured research program of farm labor research, i.e. an ongoing effort to systematically investigate, revise/refine, and test new hypotheses which might have practical relevance for crafting increasingly effective programs or overall policy in this realm.[3]

The most extensive research effort was occasioned by passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and limited by the analytic framework that dominated public discourse at that point in time. For example, the Commission on Agricultural Workers (CAW) sponsored an extensive program of field research during the period from 1990-1992, but these studies focused primarily on a limited set of Congressionally mandated questions. Some of these Congressionally-mandated questions (e.g. the extent of unemployment and underemployment of farmworkers) had, and continue to have, general relevance to farm labor policy and program services, but many others were based on flawed assumptions or had only limited relevance to long-term issues.

Of the post-IRCA research efforts, at least one, the Department of Labor's National Agricultural Worker Survey (NAWS), was designed to provide a series of high-quality

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[2] Elizabeth Briody's research in the 1980's provides important insights as to how this period fits into the overall picture of Mexico-US migration and ongoing evolution of the farm labor force as does Dennis Nodin Valdes' study, **Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970**. (University of Texas Press, 1991) We also discuss the dynamics of the Texas-based long-haul migrant circuit **in Working Poor:Farmworkers in the United States** (Temple University Press, 1995).

[3] For example, we are not aware that there was any research as to whether Braceros who first came to the United States as "guest workers" would, in fact, return to their sending villages (as was intended) or settle in the U.S. or ultimately adopt a binational employment strategy, alternating work in the US and Mexico throughout their worklives. Anna Garcia's and Ed Kissam's recent discussions with aging Braceros in Mexico and observations of Bracero projects in California's Central Valley working with these former migrants in mounting a class action suit to collect unpaid back wages withheld in the program provide clear-cut evidence that many of these guestworkers actually settled in the U.S.

cross-sectional profiles of the MSFW population. NAWS is a valuable resource in that more than a decade of annual "snapshots" of the farm labor force make it possible to track some important macro-level changes in the population characteristics of the US farm labor force, as well changes in wages, employment patterns, housing arrangements, and working conditions. However, this otherwise valuable analytic tool does not provide a framework for longitudinal analyses of individuals' farm labor market experience needed to fully understand patterns of employability development and employment outcomes.

This limitation is important for strategic planning related to policies and programs oriented toward MSFW employment security or workforce development—because there is a need to analyze employability using a life cycle perspective. To design effective employment training programs for MSFW (as well as to evaluate those which are currently operated) it would be desirable to have at least a sound understanding of what happens over the work life of MSFW's in general and, ideally, for targeted sub-populations—e.g. teenagers, women, workers with different levels of basic educational attainment.. Standard JTPA/WIA followup data do not provide useful information for this purpose and the NAWS 12-month work history, an invaluable dataset for understanding key short-term issues such as levels of seasonal underemployment, annual migration patterns, and mix of employment cannot trace the trajectory of farmworkers' employment over a 30-50 year worklife.

In the realm of migration research, a crucial component for developing a sound understanding of the U.S. farm labor force, there are equally vexing limitations. Despite an early recognition that Mexican migration to the United States was not a one-time phenomenon but, rather, part of a "career" adaptation of migrant-sending villages in Mexico, there has been uneven research followup oriented toward developing a better understanding of the implications of the process of *nortenizacion* first described by Rafael Alarcon and Douglas Massey in **Return to Aztlan** (Massey et al, 1987). Similarly, the implications of the kind of stage migration described by Richard Mines, Michael Kearney, and others, has important implications for understanding the skills set which immigrant farmworkers bring to the US agricultural workplace have never been explored within the context of employment policy or program planning

A study of the policy implications of return migration as aging Mexican immigrants is a case in point. Belinda Reyes analysis of patterns of migrants' return to their villages of origin shows, for example, that California Proposition 187 debate about the costs of social services to immigrants were deeply flawed because they incorrectly assumed that all immigrants to the US would remain in the country throughout their lives.[4] Working with Alarcon and other long-time researchers, she is now beginning to generate a longitudinal analysis of how migration changes the life of both sending and receiving communities over time. However, the implications of this sort of research as input for assessing the sorts of policies and programs which might be needed to assist aging

[4] Belinda Reyes, **Dynamics of Immigration: Return Migration to Western Mexico**, Public Policy Institute of California, 1997.

MSFW's in dealing with the inevitable process of becoming less competitive in tasks that rest on physical stamina, have never been explored.

Although a significant and growing body of research on Mexico-US migration implies the need for greater attention to migration flows (as distinct from the sorts of census-based or CPS-based or other cross-sectional analyses of stocks of immigrants) as part of US employment policy, we are not aware that this sort of comprehensive policy linkage has been developed or that initiatives based on these insights have been proposed, much less implemented. While there is growing level of interest among policymakers in at least one aspect of the de facto binational labor market—the massive flows of remittances from Mexican immigrants working in the U.S. to rural areas in Mexico—there has not yet emerged a consensus that we need to develop an integrated analytic framework for understanding the national and binational implications of a transnational population of MSFW's numbering well over 1 million persons.[5]

Our observations and discussions with farmworker youth in the recent 1999-2000 Aguirre International study of the living and working conditions of minors working in agriculture make it clear that a "life cycle" analysis is needed to develop genuinely responsive programs, as well as to assess the full implications of possible changes in immigration policy, changes in program eligibility requirements, and a wide range of other legislative and regulatory options.[6]

Despite Limitations, Important Patterns are Discernible

Despite the limitations of current farm labor research, some workforce and farm labor market patterns that have important implications for policy development and program planning are becoming evident. I review these in this section, focusing on changes over the past decade, and conclude that the phenomenon which underlies these patterns is the emergence of a binational labor market..

1. Network-Based Diffusion and Ethnic Shifts in Composition of the Farm Labor Force

Analyses of farmworkers' social networks, the ethnic composition of the farm labor force, and migration patterns of farmworkers makes it clear that the U.S. farm labor market is already a binational one. Over the past 10-15 years there has network-based diffusion of migration patterns. Over time, the one-on-one correspondence of Mexican migrant-sending villages and U.S. migrant-receiving areas has given rise to widespread diffusion. This pattern might be depicted visually as having a bar bell shape with

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[5] The April, 2000 NAWS report indicated that 52% of the current SAS labor force is undocumented. While a significant proportion of undocumented workers are de facto US residents (not transnational migrants), there is also turnover in the farm labor force as transnational migrants return to Mexico for short or extended periods of time but, then, subsequently re-enter the US farm labor force.

[6] E. Kissam et al, "No Longer Children: Case Studies of the Living and Working Conditions of the Youth Who Harvest America's Crops", report to Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, U.S. Department of Labor, October, 2000.

outward-moving ripples of network linkages propagating around both foci of sending areas and receiving areas.

The long-prevalent view of the US farm labor force as consisting predominantly of Texas-based migrants (many of whom were actually immigrants from northeastern Mexico) has little validity. Surely, in the 1950's and 1960's Texas-based crewleaders travelling "long haul migrant circuits" set in motion a variety of changes in farm labor recruitment and supervision, but the picture of crews of Texas families of "follow the crop" crews of family migrants travelling throughout the U.S. is now half a century old.

Elizabeth Briody discovered that *colonias*-based migration had begun to decrease as early as in the late 1960's and our own observations and discussions (Griffith and Kissam, 1995) in Weslaco, TX, in other areas of he lower Rio Grande Valley, and in areas where Texas migrants had first "pioneered" such as Central Washington and California's San Joaquin Valley made it clear that by the late 1980's, the composition of the U.S. farm labor force had changed dramatically and that labor market participation of Texas migrants was rapidly dwindling. Community surveys of *colonias* in the Lower Rio Grande Valley conducted by the Texas Department of Human Resources in the early 1990's confirm that although farmwork was still one of a variety of low-wage occupations in which *colonias* residents worked, MSFW's were definitely a small minority of the local population.

At the macro-level of communities, states, and regions, influxes of transnational migrants are changing the face of communities throughout rural America. In the early 1990's, Richard Mines began to distinguish between "established" and "pioneering" farm labor areas which do not have such a long history of migration, most strikingly the Southeastern United States. These trends, first described in detail in CAW case study research on Georgia and South Carolina farm labor markets (Griffith and Amendola, 1992) have accelerated in the ensuing decade, making the Eastern Seaboard a region with very substantial concentrations of transnational migrants.[7] Florida-based migration networks have now extended their reach to Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Maryland, Virginia, and New Jersey.

During the same period, the importance of South Texas as a sending region for migrants has diminished dramatically, as Texas-based farmworkers age out of the farm labor force and are replaced with transnational migrants. Along the Pacific Seaboard, there are comparable developments as migration circuits linking production regions in California, Oregon, and Washington emerge.

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[7] See Bruce Hudson, "The Florida Citrus Labor Market" for an early snapshot of the shift in the Florida citrus labor force from reliance on local African-American workers to Texas-based migrants. In our 1992-1993 field research with David Griffith and others on inter-ethnic relations in South Florida, Anna Garcia and Ed Kissam collected accounts of the experiences of the first Texas migrants to arrive in Collier County, Florida (in 1949) and analyzed some of the implications in Ed Kissam, "From Mutualism to Merchants of Labor", presentation to the American Anthropology Association, 1995.

In Mexico, the rural areas which migration researchers first identified as "core sending regions" of Mexico, i.e. Michoacan, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Durango, Zacatecas, and San Luis Potosi, are relatively less important as areas of origin for newly-arriving migrant farmworkers as are Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Chiapas. Our own research last year began to suggest that migration networks in Chiapas and Oaxaca are now extending into adjacent areas of Veracruz, and that the newest migrants will be Veracruzanos.

On the U.S. side, our recent case study research (Kissam et al, 2000) shows that the geographical diffusion of farmworkers into "pioneering" regions, is giving rise to a dramatic shift in the ethnic composition of the farm labor force in these areas—because farm labor recruitment and supervision continues to be network-based and, thus, the composition of the labor force in these "secondary" migrant-receiving areas replicates the labor force composition in the primary migrant-receiving area. These findings have many implications for program design and service delivery. Perhaps the most obvious are that: a) regional service delivery strategies now make more sense than purely local service delivery systems and b) that "rationalization" of service delivery systems to conform to the actual configuration of migrant circuits (as opposed to the arbitrary regional jurisdictions of federal agencies) deserves to be a priority.[8]

In 2000, we find that indigenous ethnic minorities within a Latino farm labor force are making up a greater and greater proportion of the local farm labor force throughout the country. At least three-quarters of the teenage farmworkers we interviewed in the course of our study of teenage workers are from indigenous communities in Mexico or Guatemala. Along the entire length of the Eastern Seaboard, there are increasing numbers of Guatemalan and Mexican Maya, Zapotec workers from central Oaxaca state, and smaller numbers of Mixtec and Triqui migrants from western Oaxaca state and the eastern areas of the state of Guerrero which adjoins the leading sending regions of Juxtlahuaca and Silacoyoapan.[9] Along the Pacific Seaboard, there is an equally dramatic increase in the numbers of indigenous farmworkers but the dominant networks are the Mixtec and Triqui ones;[10] interestingly the ethnic composition of the labor force of working teenagers in California and Oregon, is now very similar to that of Baja California in the late 1980's.

Clearly, an important implication of these shifts for workforce security is that program designs that seek to be responsive to the unique needs of migrants must be re-

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[8] The development of small community-based MSFW service providers into large, regional consortia is, from this perspective, a fortunate development and prrograms such as Migrant Headstart have, for years, engaged in innovative and collaborative efforts to conform service delivery to the migration patterns of migrants. The problems of arbitrary regionalization became clear to us in the course of collaborative work with the Bureau of the Census to improve the historical undercount of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in California. Because census operations in the state are managed by two regional offices—Seattle and Los Angeles—problems in coordinating efforts throughout the state were chronic.

[9] Other indigenous groups in the Eastern Seaboard migrant labor force include Otomi (from the state of Hidalgo), and Purepecha speaking migrants (from the Sierra Tarasca of Michoacan).

[10] Other indigenous groups in the labor force along the Pacific Seaboard include Cora and Amuzgueños.

conceptualized with respect to the kinds of interventions that make sense and with respect to staffing. Service delivery systems that recognize the actual patterns of contemporary farmworker migration—shaped less by geography than by network configuration—are critically needed, as is culturally competent program staffing.

2. Shifts in Recruitment and Organization of the Farm Labor Force

Over the past decade, agricultural producers' reliance on labor market intermediaries has increased dramatically. Even when workers are apparently "direct hire" workers, a labor market intermediary, a fellow worker, or relative has usually been involved in recruiting and orienting the worker to his or her employment in U.S. crop agriculture. Labor recruitment is already binational and, as might be expected in such a large and diverse regional market, a wide variety of arrangements for financing migration, arranging for border crossing, and transportation of migrants in Mexico and in the United States are already in place.

The current idea, long promoted by agricultural associations, that an official guestworker program is needed to supply labor to U.S. agriculture is ludicrous as a practical strategy for managing labor supply and demand and a cynical one when proposed as a strategy for assuring workers' employment security and legal treatment. There is consensus among farm labor researchers that enforcement of U.S. labor law in the agricultural workplace is minimal and that a wide range of worker abuses are linked to the fact that standard strategies for enforcement work very poorly in the context of well establish but informal systems of recruitment, supervision, and payment.

Our interviews and observations in our research on working teenagers—on both the Eastern Seaboard and the Western seaboard-- suggest that it is critical to look carefully at the implications of actual recruitment patterns, migration circuits, and modes of staffing and supervising field labor in systematically formulating strategies to improve farmworkers' well-being.

For example, our research shows that, although there are important differences in the details of farm labor recruitment in the West and in the East, there is increasing "regionalization" of recruitment in both areas. The fact that Florida's production of vegetables and citrus leads to peak labor demand in the period from November through March is, we believe, an important factor which makes the organization of the East Coast farm labor force quite different from that of the West Coast, making Florida a preferential destination for new migrants.

In Immokalee, Florida, we discovered that the role played by *pinteros* (i.e. tomato gleaning contractors) who had, in the late 1980's, relied primarily on extended family members to harvest "pink" tomatoes bought directly from growers had expanded into full-fledged labor contracting—an important development. Immokalee "pinteros" in the early spring of 2000 were hiring and transporting workers to harvest crops throughout a regional area stretching from Dade County (2.5 hours by road to the southeast) to Wauchula (2 hours to the north). Not surprisingly, wages and working conditions for the

workers employed by these intermediaries were much worse than those hired by "regular" (large) labor contractors who recruited workers for the local harvest, a factor which, in principle, should be taken into account in targeted enforcement of labor laws.

In Woodburn, Oregon, we discovered that the recruitment networks of farm labor contractors harvesting strawberries and caneberries extended not only to Santa Maria, Oxnard, and Madera, California but, also, to San Quintin, Baja California, and to sending villages in the Juxtlahuaca region of Oaxaca.[11]

Both along the Eastern Seaboard and the Pacific Seabboard, farm labor force recruitment, transportation, orientation to employment, and financial transactions (including the critical arrangements to pay for unauthorized migration) were made within a transnational sphere, involving institutions and individuals in both Mexico and in the United States.

3. Shifts in the Demographic Composition of the Farm Labor Force

Over the past decade there has been steady, ongoing change in the male/female ratio of farmworkers and, we believe, a shift in the age structure of the farm labor force. In 1990, about 71% of the farmworkers in the U.S. were men; in 2000, approximately 80% are men. In 1990, about 5% of the farm labor force was made up of teenage workers under the age of 18 while in 2000, about 8% of the farm labor force consists of teenagers under the age of 18 and more than one-third (36%) are 24 years of age or younger.

In reality, these indicators tell only part of the story of the changing composition of the farm labor force since the changes in gender ratio and age profile of the labor force are actually the result of a trend which has now, for more than three decades, shifted toward preferential recruitment and employment of "unaccompanied males", that is, foreign-based transnational migrant men rather than U.S.-based crews composed of family workers. What we see in terms of the U.S. farm labor force in 2000 is the result of more than 30 years of co-evolution in which a binational labor market has gradually emerged as Mexican migrant-sending communities came to rely increasingly on northward migration as an economic strategy and predominant career trajectory while employers came to develop the sorts of employment practices and informal network-based arrangements which would facilitate recruitment of an ongoing supply of transnational migrants.

For example, in addressing the employment, employability, and education issues faced by teenage farmworkers, federal program design and regulatory priorities have assumed that the central social policy issues to address was the career trajectory of the children of current farmworkers (e.g. assuring that children would not work in the fields and that the

[11] Filed by Daviid Runsten and Anna Garcia as part of the Farm Labor Supply Study for USDOL research the following yhear on California and Baja California tomato workers for the Commission on Agricultural Workers, and subsequent research by the full California Institute of Rural Studies of Mixtec village networks provides extremely valuable baseline information which we have used in assessing changes in the composition of the Pacific Seaboard labor force over the past decade.

children of farmworkers will not themselves go into farmwork). However, the actual social policy priorities, if based on empirical considerations, would be quite different, i.e. assuring the welfare of "naive" newly-arrived teenagers who know little about the dangers of farmwork, life in the United States, or what types of help they might be able to get when they encounter serious problems in their life in the United States.

4. Changes in the Flow of Migrants Throughout Transnational Migration Networks

Immediately after passage of IRCA made it possible for more than 1 million previously unauthorized transnational migrants to achieve legal status, the volume and pace of shuttle migration quite probably increased because the provisions of IRCA did not allow many of the wives and children of newly-legalized men to achieve legal status. Over the past decade, the shuttle migration of legalized, aging farmworkers led to increasing recruitment of groups of "unaccompanied" transnational migrants whose extended family and village networks facilitated northward migration. As it became clear that IRCA's employer sanctions presented virtually no deterrent to migration and as Border Patrol staffing increased in response to public concern about unauthorized immigration, the cost of Mexico-US migration increased greatly. The average cost for an undocumented migrant to come to work in U.S. agriculture has probably at least doubled over the decade as our recent research showed that the average teenage migrant paid about $1,300 to come to the United States.

Although extended family and village networks' "funds of knowledge" tend to bring down the costs of migration, we have found that many newly-arriving teenage farmworkers remain in the United States for more than one season—because they cannot afford to return home. This leads us to believe that the pace of shuttle migration may be slowing as transnational migrants who have successfully entered the U.S. and found agricultural employment become increasingly likely to remain in the U.S. for an extended period of time. Thus, for the teenage transnational migrants for whom work in U.S. agriculture is their first "real job" (i.e. as distinguished from unpaid labor helping their parents with subsistence or commercial farming or artisanry), life in the United States is becoming a greater part of the time they spend "growing up".

5. Changes in Educational Attainment of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Because the U.S. farm labor force is "reproduced" in Mexico and Guatemala, not in the United States, the primary determinants of farmworkers' educational attainment are the extent of *nortenizacion* in sending villages (which profoundly impacts teenagers' aspirations and career plans), together with educational opportunities available to youth in sending villages. Because the U.S. farm labor force consists primarily of migrants from rural sending areas of Mexico, social and rural development policies in rural areas (as distinct from urban ones) are particularly relevant factors to consider in planning employment training programs which build upon the basic skills set of MSFW's.

Table 1 on the next page reports the educational attainment of teenage and young adult farmworkers we interviewed in 1999-2000.

Table 1
Educational Attainment of Teenage Farmworkers 1999-2000

Years of Schooling	Eastern Migrant Stream N=69	Western Migrant Stream N=85	Overall Total N = 154
Less than elementary (0-5)	33%	40%	37%
Completed elementary (6)	42%	25%	33%
Secundaria (7-9)	6%	22%	15%
Preparatoria , HS, or more (9+)*	19%	13%	16%

** This includes 3% of the working teenagers who have attended high school in the U.S.*

While **Table 1** shows that new entrants into the MSFW population continue to be seriously educationally disadvantaged, it appears that levels of educational attainment in rural areas of Mexico (less so in Guatemala) are beginning to improve—in part because of policy changes in the Mexican educational system which made school attendance through *secundaria* mandatory. At the same time, it is clear that in the context of rural migrant-sending communities, there continue to be serious inequities in access to education since the majority of school dropouts occur because students must help their families work in subsistence or commercial farming.[12]

Our interviews with teenage farmworkers show that there are also changes in new migrants' educational and career aspirations. We found a very broad spectrum of educational aspirations among the youth with whom we talked. Even though more than two-thirds (70%) had only an elementary school education or less, these youth had left school for a variety of reasons. Although all had come to the United States to do farmwork, many, perhaps half, are interested in eventually finding other careers. All expressed a degree of uncertainty as to whether these sorts of ideas are (idle) "dreams" or possibly personal pathways for getting ahead.

The remaining one-third of the youth who had reached *secundaria* and begun, or even completed, *preparatoria*, or attended junior high or high school in the United States are, with respect to prevailing patterns of schooling in Mexico, educational high achievers. We heard from many that they were reluctant to leave school.

Some of those who had left school in Mexico said they had left because they were the eldest son, some because their families "were really poor", some because of the "politics" of getting into the university system. While, like their less-educated co-workers, most have come to the United States to earn money, they are also interested in education and learning, have greater self-confidence in their own learning ability, and represent a

[12] The Secretaria de Educacion has boldly addressed these problems with payments of subsidies to families which keep their children in school.

potential market for learning services. We suspect that these youth will have a competitive advantage in U.S. farmwork, since there is some upward mobility for workers with a sound foundation of basic literacy skills. These youth are, in fact, those most likely to eventually settle in the United States since they are the most likely to manage to make at least a modest living in farmwork.

What emerges from these observations, the Aguirre team's observations in a major sending area (Hidalgo), and our review of the literature is a strong reminder of the extent to which cultural values, institutional practices, and prevailing attitudes regarding education are in flux.[1] While the research shows clearly that prevailing patterns of work can create value systems that undermine education, for example, as boys come to see work instead of schooling as a "masculine" career path, this social pressure is offset by Mexican social policy and active promotion of education in rural areas where key institutional plays recognize the value of education as an investment in workforce productivity..

The Binational Dimensions of the U.S. Farm Labor Force

The patterns described in the previous section indicate that serious distortions arise in the course of policy or program planning efforts which depict the U.S. farm labor force as a static "population" whose composition we can understand, at least imperfectly, by looking only at conditions in the United States, or still worse, at conditions as they were two or three decades ago.

The trends we highlight in the previous section show that we must consider the U.S. farm labor market to be a sector of the post-NAFTA North American regional economy which has already become partially integrated and where the long-expected "convergence" of two distinct labor markets has already occurred to some extent. The U.S. farmworker population is in reality a binational population and the U.S. farm labor market is, in reality, a binational labor market.

In future research we hope to illuminate the complexities of the ebbs and flows of transnational workers' migration where there are not so much one-on-one village to village correspondences as part of a migration circuit as region to region correspondences. But the general picture is fairly clear. The new entrants to the US farm labor force, both teenagers and older men who have encountered economic difficulties in their home villages and decided to migrate north, are born in rural areas of Mexico, many of them in remote indigenous villages.

In recent years, many of the younger transnational migrants have thought about career alternatives to subsistence farming in the peasant economies where they have grown up, but one of the most promising employment options has been to come north to the United States to work as a farmworker—as a "target earner" seeking to accumulate enough money to set up their own small business in Mexico or go on to college, as a "career farmworker" seeking to find the most stable possible employment available to them in the U.S. and move upward into an employer's core labor force or become a farm labor

contractor after a few years of field work, or as a typical young teenager who has not yet developed any long-term career plans. Standard "domestic" social programs crafted with the implicit ethnocentric assumption that all farmworkers live with their families in the US communities in which they work are seriously compromised in terms of effectiveness as a result of this mistaken assumption. Individual lives, family lives, and even civic participation are transnational.[13]

As is increasingly the case in a global economy, the exact locale at which an interaction or transaction between worker and employer takes place is less important than the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic framework in which it is "located" in conceptual space. From a practical perspective, the important contextual features which affect the economic well-being of an individual US farmworker are more closely related to his or her network ties, funds of knowledge, and social relationships than to the particular crop-task he or she is performing at a given time or the particular agricultural producer for whom he or she works—although the type of employer, labor contractor or agricultural producer, does still have a major impact on earnings and working conditions.[14]

Post-IRCA policy discussions of issues related to agricultural workplace stability are a case in point where failure to understand the transnational dimensions of the US farm labor force proved to be an impediment to making any real progress. Agricultural producers' concerns focused on the "SAW exit rate", based on worries that they would "lose" newly legalized farmworkers to non-agricultural employers. Had this exercise in political posturing been transformed into an emphasis on efforts to develop a "sustainable" farm labor force it would have been well-justified but those engaged neglected to observe that time was part of the equation.

While some MSFW service programs adjusted to the reality that their clientele were not really workers who had been born and educated in the United States, they failed to give much thought to the fact that the composition of the farm labor force is constantly changing—since US workers make up only a small fraction of the overall labor force. Yet the average farmworker who achieved legal status as a result of the SAW provisions—a 28 year-old Mexican male who had worked for several years in U.S. field

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[13] Roger Rouse's study of the Aguililla, Michoacan to Redwood City, California migrant circuit is an important milestone in understanding of how family life takes place in transnational communities but the work of researchers such as Fred Krissman and Bonnie Bade provide additional valuable insights. Jesus Martinez Saldaña has made important contributions to understanding of transnational life in his writing on the emergence of a transnational concept of civic life. See Jesus Martinez, "In Search of our Lost Citizenship: Mexican Immigrant, the Right to Vote, and the Transition to Democracy in Mexico", 1998.

[14] For example, David Runsten, Jo Ann Intili, and I analyzed the data we had collected in Parlier, California on a sample of workers in 73 households, all of whom worked in a variety of crop-tasks available in that labor market and found dramatic variations in type of employment, employment-to-population ratio, and housing arrangement in relation to network affiliation. Individuals affiliated with "dominant" family/village networks were much more likely to have access to better-paying jobs with better working conditions than less-established networks.

work is now 42 years old; the youngest SAW's, teenagers who first worked in US agriculture in 1985 or 1986 are now in their 30's.[15]

Whether or not he decided to leave farmwork, the typical SAW is now a middle-aged head of household. If he remained in agriculture, he is likely to have achieved a measure of job stability as a worker in the "core labor force" for an employer who has come, over the years, to rely on him to perform a wide range of tasks. Or, alternatively, he may have become a farm labor market intermediary, recruiting younger men to do the field work which he no longer has the physical stamina to do, or, perhaps, not only recruiting but, also, employing and supervising them as a farm labor contractor. The "culprit" in the SAW "exit rate" is not so much urban employers willing to compete with agricultural producers by paying higher wages to Mexican immigrant workers as it is time itself.

Thus, a dynamic perspective on the US farm labor force makes it necessary to consider who the "replacement workers" are who end up filling the demand for a variety of poorly-paid field work tasks in labor-intensive agriculture, as former field workers leave agriculture. At the same time, recognition of the extent to which the labor force is constantly churning requires carefuly re-thinking about the role employment and training programs (which have, for several decades now, conceived of their primary role as one of helping farmworkers leave farmwork). Although, unfortunately, a minority of the IRCA cohort of legalized farmworkers continue to work and try to support a family under the marginal conditions encountered in seasonal agricultural work, it should be no surprise that the proportion of unauthorized workers in the U.S. farm labor force has steadily increased—from about 9% in 1990 when legalization under IRCA was complete (NAWS 1993) to 52% in 2000 (NAWS 2000).

What has become evident in our recent research on teenage youth working in U.S. agriculture is that it is critical to look very carefully at the working and living conditions of these youth—because this sub-group makes up the "leading edge" of demographic and socioeconomic shifts that will eventually ripple throughout the U.S. farmworker population. A focus on new transnational migrants entering the farm labor market is useful because there is constant attrition from the labor force of field workers as farmworkers age, move upward from field work to supervisory positions, or go to work in other immigrant-dominated sectors of the economy.

Assuming the baseline for overall fieldwork labor force replacement is about 7% per year—that is, if the typical effective working life for a field worker is 15 years and that there is a workforce of about 1.8 million farmworkers in seasonal agricultural services (SAS)— the influx of newly-arriving youth coming to work in U.S. agriculture is probably 35,000-45,000 per year.[16] Moreover, the ratio of newly-arrived (<2 years) youth

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[15] Interestingly, the age distribution of SAW applicants in 1988 is very similar to the age distribution of NAWS interviewees in 1997-1998 as 36% were 24 years of age or younger.

[16] Of course, not all farm labor force exits consist of workers who age out of farmwork. However, we assume that there is equilibrium among mid-career entrants and exits, i.e. those dissatisfied farmworkers who return home and new migrants who arrive as 20-40 year olds.

to medium-term transnational migrants (2+ years) among the unauthorized teenage workers is quite high – 3:1. This would seem to indicate a fairly high turnover rate within this segment of the farm labor force while, at the same time, indicating an accrual of more than 20,000 new teenage farmworkers per year remaining in U.S. farmwork.[17]

Thus, since the current and future face of the US farm labor force is shaped by primarily by migration from Mexico and Guatemala, the composition of the current farm labor force is profoundly affected by two countervailing trends—the rapidly escalating cost of migration and the erosion of wages and working conditions in U.S. farmwork as labor surpluses continue. The high cost of migration induces newly-arrived migrants (both teenagers and adults) to remain in the United States for a protracted period of time once they have arrived. However, one of the uncertainties—for individual youth and for general efforts to analyze transnational migrant youth's decisions about remaining in farmwork or returning home-- is that because most have little experience with U.S. crop tasks they have no idea how well they will do and how they will feel about working and living conditions. Some do well and others do not. Although we know something about how task structuring in the workplace affects productivity we still do not know enough about all the factors that affect individual worker productivity; more research is needed in this area.

In the case study communities we studied in the youth research, since US-born and raised youth are, at most, "birds of passage" participating for one or two summers in the agricultural workforce, the youngest full-time farmworkers are generally the most recently arrived transnational migrants (although a few very young local teenagers and farm family youth work in operations such as packing). A few of the teenagers working in harvest tasks who were part of a family household (probably less than one out of ten youth who are working) may qualify for legal permanent resident status and citizenship—based on their father's or mother's status as a Special Agricultural Worker (SAW) but they are currently employed without a valid work authorization.[18] **Table 2** on the next page reports the immigration status and length of time in the United States of the young farmworkers we talked to in the course of our field research in 2000.

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[17] Accurate estimation of stocks and flows of workers <18 years of age is not straightforward—as there are uncertainties relating to rates of return migration, the composition of the workers who are pre-teens, and the crop-task distribution of these workers so this is a preliminary estimate. NAWS data show that that about 70% are "field workers" (i.e. unskilled workers). This implies about 90,000 newcomers each year of whom about half are <18—based on the distribution of "first year worked in U.S. agriculture" reported by NAWS respondents. Further research will be needed to develop more precise estimates—taking into account both very-short term workers and attrition. Of course, if the ratio of new comers to teen workers aging out of the youth labor force is greater than 1, this would indicate that the labor force is gradually accruing more teenage workers.

[18] It is not yet clear how many farmworker dependents were able to adjust their immigration status as a result of LIFE's reinstatement of the 245(i) provisions. As this paper is being written it is likely that Congress will extend the "window of opportunity" for at least several more months.

Table 2
Teenage MSFW's Length of Time in the U.S. and Immigration Status

Status/Time in U.S.[19]	Eastern Migrant Stream N=81	Western Migrant Stream N=133	Overall Total N = 214
Unauthorized Recently-arrived (<2 years)	69%	79%	75%
Unauthorized Live in U.S. (2+ years)	24%	19%	21%
Legal Permanent Resident	2%	1%	2%
U.S. Citizen	5%	1%	2%

In summary, then, the old static view of MSFW's as a "population" must be replaced with a dynamic view of participation in the farm labor force as a phase in the work lives of rural Mexican and Guatemalans whose worklife trajectory will take them from the peasant communities in which they were born, to US immigrant-receiving communities, via extended family and village networks. Having arrived in the United States, some will diffuse into other immigrant-dominated sectors of the U.S. labor market (e.g. construction, landscaping). Because migration patterns and career pathways do not follow the neat, clear-cut patterns of flow charts, the classic distinction between "sojourners" and "settlers" will be a fuzzy one. Some of these farmworkers will, as they age, continue to work in agriculture throughout their lives, while others will move into non-agricultural work in the United States or in Mexico. Some U.S.-born youth will join their farmworker parents in the fields but those who do are likely to be those who see their lives as ones which take place in the context of a transnational community, not particularly as youth "belonging" to a U.S. neighborhood or community.

What this means is that domestic social policy which seeks to provide support to MSFW's as part of a strategy to ameliorate the consequences of living and working in sub-standard conditions will need to look carefully at whether the interventions they have designed and the service delivery networks they maintain are, in fact, able to have significant impacts on the lives of most farmworkers. And, at the same time, the U.S. and Mexico must explicitly move to develop collaborative strategies to address the problems faced by farmworkers—a) at the most effective point in the life/career cycle and b) throughout their migrant circuit whether the point of service delivery is Mexico or the United States.

In the following section of this paper, we discuss several of the policy and programmatic implications which stem from the recognition that the US farmworker population is

[19] Time in the U.S. is from last entry for shuttle migrants, i.e. migrants who have traveled between a sending village and the U.S. more than one time.

actually one which lives and works in a "virtual space" which is characterizes US agriculture as a distinct realm within a binational North American labor market.

Policy and Program Implications

In this section we recommend four broad areas of initiatives where action is needed as part of recognizing and responding to the current reality of a binational agricultural workforce – a) immigration policy, b) migrant education, c) farmworker employment training, and d) labor law enforcement. We emphasize immigration policy and workplace law enforcement in addition to educational and employment training issues and interventions because these are areas of federal-state action which have immediate short-term impacts on the central issues related to workforce security and economic self-reliance.

1. Overcome Service Barriers based on Immigration Status

Without addressing the service eligibility barriers due to immigration status, it will not be possible to develop a systematic and comprehensive strategy for improving the employment stability and economic self-sufficiency of the U.S. farm labor force. Federal legislation will be needed to overcome the current service barriers which deny more than half of the farmworkers in the United States access to key services they need to increase their employment stability.

Immigrant populations, including farmworkers, cannot be neatly distinguished from Americans as a whole. Because of the vagaries of immigration regulations, 85% of immigrant households consist of "mixed status" families (Fix and Zimmerman, 1999).[20] Program eligibility restrictions based on individual immigration status are costly in terms of case management and dysfunctional in presuming to divide families into "deserving" and "undeserving" family members (e.g. undocumented vs. LPR or citizen family members). All family members share the frustrations, problems, pain, and anger of those who are ineligible for critical services.

Within the MSFW population, program eligibility barriers based on immigration status are particularly serious. Although access to pre-school programs such as Migrant Head Start and K-12 education is <u>not</u> conditioned on immigration status, other benefits and services which would contribute to the economic stability of both adults and children in MSFW households, most notably Unemployment Insurance and employment training services, <u>are</u> conditioned on immigration status.

In terms of irrationality, the exclusion of undocumented teenagers who have grown up in the United States, gone to US elementary schools and graduated from US high schools from access to federal financial assistance is a problem of particular concern. These youth are the "success stories", children from low-income, educationally disadvantaged

[20] Breakouts are not available for farmworkers although NAWS data provide the data to develop such analyses.

families who have, despite all odds (and perhaps with the benefits of programs such as Migrant Head Start and Migrant Education) who have remained in school.

In terms of improving the economic security of MSFW's, the most obvious policy solution would be passage of new amnesty legislation—either legislation along the lines supported by the AFL-CIO and many immigrant advocates.

If such legislation were not politically feasible, "SAW II" legislation might provide a reasonable response. However, such legislation would need to incorporate key elements of the industry-UFW accords reached in December, 2000—most critically, assurances that MSFW dependents, not just current farmworkers themselves would be eligible for status adjustment, and assurances that workers in the process of qualifying for status adjustment be able to move freely from employer to employer. In forging such legislation, currently available research on the extent of farmworker underemployment should, of course, play a key role in assuring that "look back" requirements for participation not be too stringent and that, if there were requirements for MSFW's who benefited from the legislation to continue in farmwork, the time period not be unrealistically long, minimum days worked per year be reasonable and take into account the many factors (including injury and illness) which can lead to involuntary unemployment.

Even if broad legislation to afford currently unauthorized MSFW's adjustment were not politically viable, there is a powerful rationale for special legislative initiatives to address the problems faced by teenage youth who are working as farmworkers or who are MSFW dependents. Within the context of an information economy where analytic thinking, problem-solving skills, understanding of systems, and effective communication skills are the key to global competitiveness, there is a strong argument that special provisions would be justified to allow all current farmworkers and MSFW dependents who are teenagers or young adults (i.e. age 16-24) access to the full-range of skills development programs—including all employment training services which are currently available only to citizens and legal permanent residents.

Legislation recently introduced by Congressman Berman, the Student Adjustment Act, takes this approach to overcoming the barriers faced by U.S. high school graduates, many of them farmworkers, who have successfully completed high school and wish to continue their education. We believe the arguments put forward in support of this legislation hold with equal force with respect to access to employment training services for currently undocumented youth and young adults working in farmwork.

2. Develop Migrant Education Program Designs to Provide Basic Skills Development for Working MSFW's who are Teenagers or Young Adults

As part of the system of K-12 education system, services from Migrant Education programs is not conditioned on immigration status. However, teenagers and young adults who are working full-time in farmwork are effectively denied service because virtually all services currently offered are classroom-based or, if not, are daytime programs offered

during the summer to respond to the needs of MSFW dependents. Program designs that are not adapted to the actual socioeconomic or demographic characteristics of the target population to be served presented as formidable barriers as do regulations.

NAWS data on demographics of the farm labor force suggest that there are at least 300,000 out-of-school current farmworkers 21 years of age or younger who fall into the age cohort eligible for Migrant Education services. Given the demographics of the U.S. farm labor force and continuing trends, the first item on an agenda for Migrant Education would quite practically be a reassessment of the current allocation of funding for classroom-based instruction and for services to out-of-school working teenagers and young adults and a shift of emphasis from elementary school programs to programs for newly arriving migrants.[21]

One of the most problematic facets of the working conditions and lifestyle of the transnational migrant teenagers who work in farmwork is that during adolescence, a period of tremendous personal growth, most have no explicit support for intellectual and educational development. These youth are generally healthy; few are malnourished; but they are developmentally and intellectually compromised by lack of access to programs which provide them structured opportunities to learn. Few can even find the time out from survival to take stock of their lives, to explore who they are, or where they would like to be heading.

Almost all have worked since they were children—on their parents' land, as hired agricultural laborers, or in other low-skill jobs (e.g. shoe shiner, street vendor). Almost none have gone to school in the United States. Most speak little or no English and some are limited in Spanish because their primary language is an indigenous one. Clearly, if our social policy objective is to respond to their educational needs, new program designs and priorities are needed. Their most pressing needs are to learn English, improve their basic literacy skills, and be provided opportunities to meaningfully consider a range of career options.

Programs which provide "a little bit of education" (e.g. *alfabetizacion*) will not be enough to afford these working teenagers the learning opportunities they need to prosper in a rapidly-developing North American regional economy—either in Mexico or in the U.S.. As NAFTA draws Mexico and the U.S. more closely together economically and technologically, the headlong pace of an emerging information-intensive global economy will require higher levels of information-handling facility for all workers. Both white-collar and blue-collar workers will be expected to be skillful in managing both quantitative and written information in order to participate successfully in mainstream workplaces in either country.[22]

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[21] See Jorge Ruiz-de-Velasco and Michael Fix, **Overlooked and Underserved: Immigrant Students in U.S. Secondary Schools**, Urban Institute, 2000 for an excellent overview of the demographics of the overall immigrant school-age population.

[22] Employment trends in Mexico are not unlike those in the U.S. For example, employment in agriculture, livestock, forestry fell from 24% of employment in 1990 to 20% in 1998 while service employment in community social and personal services rose (by 1%), as did employment in commerce, restaurants, and

Skillful investments in basic skills development will be one of the most powerful possible strategies to enhance their employment stability and economic self-sufficiency because this sort of basic skills foundation provides a platform of competencies which can be deployed to drive upward mobility within agriculture or to meet the demands of high-skills jobs in industries other than agriculture. Two excellent federally-developed and recognized skills frameworks already exist (SCANS and EFF); either, or both, can be used to as the template for developing highly effective skills development Migrant Education programs for working farmworkers 14-21 years of age. Both are, in a sense, "world class" curriculum frameworks in that their focus on "high performance" skills and functional information management reflects not only workplace conditions in the U.S. but throughout a global economy.

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving the Necessary Skills (SCANS) report, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor almost a decade ago, still provides a good blueprint about future workplace demand in the 21st century and provides a good analytic framework for understanding the skills the children and teenagers working in agriculture will need to develop—either if they return to Mexico or Guatemala or if they remain in the United States.[23]

A newer framework, developed by the National Institute for Literacy at Harvard University as a major initiative to reform adult education has tremendous potential as a resource for designing Migrant Education programs for working teenagers and young adults as well as in an adult education context. This framework, "Equipped for the Future" (EFF) represents, in some respects, an even more valuable framework than SCANS for developing the personal and intellectual agility needed to navigate the complexities of a worklife in a binational labor market. EFF delineates four fundamental categories of skills—communication skills, decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, and lifelong learning skills.

Under this broad umbrella, EFF identifies 16 specific competency domains. Many of these competency domains are even more relevant as part of human capital investment in developing the skills of MSFW's than for other populations of teenagers and adult learners. For example, under the "lifelong learning" area, EFF specifically identifies the objectives of preparing learners to take responsibility for learning, to reflect and evaluate, learn through research, and to use information and communications technology effectively. This sort of orientation is particularly valuable for MSFW's functioning

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hotels (up 1.5%) and construction (up >1%). Even in industrial sectors such as manufacturing skill where overall employment is not growing, skills requirements are rapidly increasing. Data from Camara Mexicana de la Industria de la Construccion.

[23] See The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, "What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000", U.S. Department of Labor, 1991. For binational implications of binational economic development see Edward Kissam and Jo Ann Intili, "From *Compadrazgo* to Total Quality Management: The Transformation of Mexican Workforce Competencies", paper presented to the 2nd Annual International Conference on Standards and Quality in Education and Training, February, 1994

within the socioeconomic "space" of the binational labor market because it highlights ways in which experiential learning can be shaped so as to provide the foundation for genuine skills growth.

In practical terms, in order to develop effective educational programs for working transnational migrant youth and young adults it will be necessary to: (a) include a heavy emphasis on ESL, (b) utilize instructional designs known to be effective in working with low-literate learners, (c) incorporate mechanisms to explore the career awareness of young working teenagers and stimulate their developing greater aspirations, (d) utilize distance learning technologies to affordably reach mobile, out-of-school learners, and (e) develop customized program designs which vary from area to area in order to respond to the needs of specific populations of indigenous children and youth. Concurrently, it will be necessary to give high priority to binational collaboration to explore innovative strategies to provide transnational migrant working youth "anytime, anyplace" opportunities for learning throughout the migrant circuit they travel.[24]

Areas which deserve particular attention and which should be addressed to truly prepare working farmworker youth and young adults to overcome the social and economic disadvantages they face include:

Quantitative Literacy. There has been much exciting curriculum development work in K-12 designed to build mathematics foundation skills (often with project-based learning). Educational services to farmworker youth could benefit greatly from this effort since quantitative literacy is clearly an important, and increasingly critical, competency for them, particularly those whose schooling in Mexico or Guatemala was only elementary school level.[25] For the working teenagers who continue in farmwork, quantitative literacy is an important practical tool for negotiating contracts and assuring that one is paid what one is owed, and assuring that payment is at least the minimum wage.[26]

Understanding the Social, Legal, and Political Universe of U.S. Life. The need to prepare working farmworker teenagers to understand the social, legal, and political context in which they function in the United States has been a long-term concern—because the marginalization of farmworkers and the fact that transnational migrant teenagers have usually only recently arrived means that they are not well prepared to

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[24] There are such working arrangements between California and Michoacan, for example, but it appears the emphasis was more on binational credit exchange than on the more practical issue of assuring continuity of education.

[25] In the mid 1990's Ed Kissam reviewed the Mexican adult education curriculum in comparison to the California adult education curriculum, finding that Mexican instruction was, not surprisingly, not oriented toward building the kinds of functional competencies needed for "US-style" reading, mathematics, and everyday living tasks.

[26] There is a good deal of practical guidance in S.J. Velarde et al, **The Adult Education of Migrant Farmworkers,** Slaughter and Associates report to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, 1994.

confront the many challenges they face in this regard.[27] This is a critical element in moving ABE/ESL education for this group toward a curriculum which is well-linked to the daily lives and challenges encountered by learners.

Building Generative English-language Competencies. The "Equipped for the Future" curriculum framework is well reasoned in emphasizing the importance of focusing on generative use of language as well as passive/receptive use of language. The context of working farmworker teenagers' very limited use of English is generally in a highly structured linguistic and socioeconomic setting. This means that the issue of developing a farmworkers' "voice" is a real educational concern. Practically, program designs that bring transnational migrant teenagers together with local bilingual and English-speaking monolingual youth in non-threatening surroundings would be tremendously useful. Support of youth recreation programs in local communities would also have significant educational impact. In general, peer-based learning programs with ample opportunities for cooperative learning become particularly attractive as strategies for addressing these learning objectives.

Building Lifelong Learning Skills. In the contemporary fast-paced information-intensive economy, career advancement and even achieving economic stability in blue collar jobs requires significant skill in navigating workplaces where occupational boundaries are not always well-defined, where technology requires workers to rapidly learn to interact with new equipment and re-configure their work into new sorts of teams and collaborative structures. Transnational migrant farmworker youth, who have had the benefit of growing up in a culture which values and practices mutualism have some foundation in this area. They may, nonetheless, need a good deal of help in translating these "foundation skills" in getting along with others into the teamwork, leadership, and communication skills required for "the new economy." Unless they develop such skills, they will be condemned to continue work in the tertiary labor market where they are currently found.

There have been a number of promising efforts to respond to farmworkers' learning needs both in K-12 and in adult education. These are all somewhat relevant to efforts to craft a response to the learning needs of out-of-school working teenagers and young adults 14-21 years of age. They are poised between childhood and adulthood. However, none of these models yet uses all the tools at hand to address the challenge of building young farmworkers' knowledge and skills—particularly in the context of an orientation toward lifelong learning. Some prototypes, issues, and models to give attention to with an eye on integrating the best features from each into a composite inventory of program design resources are the following:

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[27] The *Tierra de Oportunidad/Pais Desconocido* curriculum resources developed by Holda Dorsey and Ed Kissam for the California Department of Education's Latino Adult Education Services project in 1997 is a prototype of what might be included in such a framework. Ed Kissam and Jo Ann Intili have explored the issue of contemporary workplace skills development in "From *Compadrazgo* to Total Quality Management" (Intili and Kissam, 1992) and in "Reinventing Citizenship Instruction" (Kissam, 1993).

Family English Literacy Programs (FELP) California has explored the potential of these program designs at some length. This experience is relevant as these involved families learning together. Although many transnational migrant youth live on their own in households composed of groups of young men, others live in households with members of their extended families. In this context, family literacy might no longer refer to parents and their children learning together but, rather, to a related idea, the utility of groups with other sorts of social affinity—uncles and nephews, cousins, siblings, *paisanos* from a single village—supporting each other in a self-directed learning program.

Volunteer-Based Learning Programs. In Aguirre's evaluation of the James Irvine Foundation's multi-agency collaborative network of community based organizations working to build immigrants' civic participation in California's Central Valley we found that teenagers and adults from settled farmworker families represent a very important resource for developing informal learning programs in farmworker communities. The involvement of these bilingual youth and young adults as volunteer teachers in several program designs brings great benefits to them personally (e.g. an opportunity for career exploration, increased self-esteem, attention to learning to learn skills) while providing a cost-effective way to support out-of-school learning programs for transnational migrant teenagers who are working in U.S. agriculture.

Labor Camp-based tutoring and learning circle programs. These are programs such as those developed at SUNY-Geneseo in the 1980's. These strategies can and should be adapted and explored further as ways to involve migrant families and households of unaccompanied males in self-directed learning efforts. Mexico's adult education agency, the Instituto Nacional Para La Education de Los Adultos (INEA) has extensive experience in this realm and the promise of binational collaboration in this area is genuinely promising. The Instituto Nacional para la Educacion de los Adultos explored efforts to provide such education support to Mixtec migrants traveling from San Quintin, Baja California to Central California but the initiative was not sustained.

3. Redesign MSFW Employment Training Programs

While eligibility for Department of Labor employment training programs is currently statutorily limited to program participants who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, successful legislation to overcome eligibility restrictions should trigger a major agency-based effort to re-think the strategic objectives of MSFW employment training programs.

The "dynamic" perspective of farm labor employment as a phase in the worklife of immigrant workers implies that top priority should be given to two programmatic objectives which follow from the demographics of the farm labor force – a) focusing on career orientation and basic skills development programs designed to serve working MSFW's aged 14-24 and b) focusing on "career transition" services for aging farmworkers who cannot physically continue to work competitively as field workers and

who desperately need to find more stable employment and increase their earning power to achieve the economic stability to raise children.

In developing employment training programs which are genuinely responsive to the skills development and employability development needs of youth and young adults, a high priority would be to offer opportunities to learn what career options exist in the U.S. and in Mexico, what the educational and skill requirements might be for various occupations, and how one thinks about personal skills development and career advancement. Both the SCANS and the EFF frameworks provide a rich context for developing instructional design and content which approaches the challenges of career navigation in a binational labor market in a serious and analytic way.

In accord with the policy guidelines established more than 25 years ago in the NAACP v. Brennan litigation, such services should respond to job seekers' interests and aspirations, not pre-conceived assumptions regarding the desirability of developing employability for work within agriculture or in other non-agricultural occupations and industry sectors—encouraging youth and young adults to consider career pathways consisting of "upgrades" within agriculture and occupational migration out of agriculture as competing alternative to be chosen as part of an individualized employability development plan.

Quite specifically, those working migrant youth and young adults who remain attached to the farm labor force should have skills development opportunities to gain the skills they need to move into supervisory positions or technical specialties within agriculture. Such program services would benefit not only individual workers but, also, the industry as a whole—given the chronic problems which appear in farm labor contractor's and field supervisors' treatment of the crews which work for them.

Ironically, farmworker advocates' longstanding efforts to highlight the substandard wages and working conditions faced by field workers engaged in crop-tasks at the bottom of the farm labor occupational ladder has tended to reinforce the inaccurate view that agriculture is a thoroughly low-skill industry. In fact, as the size of agricultural production units increases, as new technologies are introduced to increase agricultural productivity/competitiveness, and as labor-intensive agriculture moves increasingly toward development of specialized "lines" of fruit and vegetable production (e.g. premium long-stemmed strawberries, apples for controlled atmosphere storage), there is growing demand for the same skills which are needed in other "high performance" workplaces in the contemporary global economy.

The current MSFW program bias toward employment training to leave agriculture, coupled with the agricultural industry's refusal to approach labor management issues in a proactive way, has denied many MSFW's access to potential occupational opportunities which might allow them to build on their experience in doing farm work and couple that experience with development the "high performance" skills identified in the SCANS and EFF frameworks (e.g. cooperation, conflict resolution and negotiation skills, the ability to guide others, , using math to solve problems and communicate, planning skills).

MSFW employment training programs oriented toward upward career mobility within agriculture would be a promising area where it would be possible to explore private-public sector collaborations. We have seen very promising workplace literacy designs in some agricultural settings but, by and large, many in the industry are not yet prepared to fully appreciate their needs for developing a supervisory infrastructure—since the practice has been to rely, instead, on farm labor contractors.[28] As the regulatory complexity of the U.S. workplace continues to increase it will place new demands on all employers. Agricultural producers, like other employers, are likely to begin to demand workers who combine practical experience with the technical expertise necessary to engage in activities such as pesticide safety and ergonomic training, implementation of integrated pest management programs, design, maintenance, and repair of automated irrigation and/or frost protection systems, operation, repair and maintenance of field packing equipment, etc.

These sorts of public-private program designs oriented toward building upward mobility in agriculture could serve both the younger segments of the MSFW population and the cohort of aging farmworkers whose qualifications include extensive practical experience. The beneficiaries of this sort of initiative in agricultural workforce security will include, in addition to program participants and agricultural employers, the field workers who will benefit from better supervision, decreased incidence of illegal treatment, and a workplace better structured to facilitate productivity.[29]

An important impetus for passage of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was the vision of a basic skills development and employment training program which would achieve better integration and collaboration between ABE/ESL and employment training service providers. While progress on this front has been slow, due to a variety of organizational and political tensions, the fundamental vision of "one-stop" centers providing sound, objective information on career options, skills development alternatives, and locally-available service providers, is an important one. We believe that the same instructional strategies we would recommend for Migrant Education and employment training service providers are appropriate for adult education service providers who make a commitment to serve farmworkers.

Where skills development oriented toward catalyzing farmworkers' career movement out of agricultural field work into non-agricultural occupations differs most significantly from skills upgrade training in agriculture is in the need to develop effective strategies for teaching ESL to learners who are very limited in English but who, also, have relatively low levels of educational attainment. However, even within a program where the

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[28] We have found it interesting to note, over the years, that farm labor contracting is an occupation which affords fairly good access to farmworker women—because it is widely recognized that the skills needed to be a successful farm labor contractor include good math skills, clerical skills, and communication skills.

[29] Because field workers' payment is often based on piece rates, a recurring theme in talks with field workers is the way in which field supervisors can contribute to or detract from individual workers' ability to achieve high piecerate-based earnings. Both physical factors (e.g. distance to dump buckets of tomatoes or strawberries, weight and type of ladders used in orchards) and organizational factors (e.g. clear assignment of rows to be picked) can have a huge impact on worker satisfaction and actual earnings.

primary objective is skills upgrading for upward mobility within agriculture, English-language skills development can play a key role—particularly since instructional materials in many technical areas continue to be English-only.

The issue of effective ESL instruction is a complex one which extends beyond the scope of this paper. However, we should note that there is a solid foundation of effective practices. Researchers associated with Aguirre International have described many of the most promising of these instructional practices in previous reports, papers, and publications (Velarde et al, 1993; Guth and Wrigley, 1993; Wrigley, Chisman, and Ewan, 1993; Kissam, Dorsey, and Intili, 1996; Kissam and Intili, 1996; Kissam and Reder, 1997; Wrigley, 2001). The most important considerations to re-emphasize here are that English-language skills development, like other areas of skills development must be conceptualized as a process of ongoing learning. In that context, particularly for MSFW's, the intervention design needs to be developed to provide learners with a "jumpstart" which will provide them the "learning to learn" skills they need to pursue an ongoing set of self-directed learning activities and to provide some strategy for providing program support, advice, and encouragement as learners. The "jumpstart" component of the ESL program design would, ideally, stress the efficacy of cooperative peer-based learning, the need for sustained effort in generative oral English (i.e. communicating actively and proactively, not simply listening), and the need to overcome barriers of ethnicity, race, and class to initiate communication with English-speaking persons.

However, broadening of program eligibility and instructional redesign is not all that is needed to improve the effectiveness and equity of MSFW employment training programs. As noted in our summary of contemporary patterns in the farm labor force, there is great ethnic diversity within the farmworker communities throughout the United States implying that better-designed outreach efforts would be needed to effectively reach sub-groups of farmworkers who might benefit from service but who are ethnic minorities within the farm labor force. Quite specifically, MSFW service providers should be encouraged to hire more demographically and culturally appropriate staff for outreach in such projects, i.e. more teenagers and young adults, particularly youth who are from the main ethnic minorities in th MSFW population such as Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Maya.

4. Strengthen Enforcement of Existing Laws by Expanding MSFW Eligibility for Free Legal Services

One unfortunate consequence of the US farm labor market being, in essence, a binational one is that employer-worker relationships are more akin to those of underdeveloped countries than to those that are expected in a developed nation such as the United States. A fundamental problem which compromises farm labor workforce stability is that agricultural employers, particularly farm labor contractors, are frequent violators of employment-related laws. Because the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division enforcement of existing laws and regulations under MSPA has been so ineffective, access to free, legal services is a critical component of a rational farm labor workforce security program-- both to assure individual farmworkers' employment security and economic self-sufficiency and to support federal, state, and local efforts to assure that there is a

"rule of law" in rural agricultural communities. Unless the majority of MSFW's who are undocumented have effective means to seek legal redress for their employers' violations of labor law, it will become increasingly difficult for all farmworkers (including the few farmworkers who are US citizens) to work in agriculture with an expectation that they will be treated fairly.

One policy option would be for the Department of Labor to contract with legal service providers or other community-based organizations to do the kind of investigation that the current federal-state system is so ill prepared to carry out. If there were actually the political will to enforce US employment law in the agricultural workplace, in the absence of immigration reform providing status adjustment for current farmworkers, it would be desirable to, at least, provide protection to unauthorized immigrant farmworkers who reported having been treated illegally.

Another, more viable, option would be to restore universal eligibility of low-income MSFW's for free legal services and increase Migrant Legal Program funding to levels where there would be a significant impact on prevailing practices in the agricultural workplace. The current Legal Services Corporation (LSC) prohibition on provision of free, legal services to undocumented immigrants by LSC grantees removes the only effective tool available to MSFW's for confronting some of the most common employment security problems they face— an employer's failure to pay wages owed, failure to comply with minimum wage regulations, and a range of abuses associated with debt peonage. Revision of the LSC prohibitions on representation of undocumented migrants would permit experienced but hamstrung legal services providers to begin helping undocumented farmworkers, those most likely to experience employer abuse— primarily by changing the prevailing conditions in the system that employs them.

Because newly-arriving transnational migrants are not simply unaware of their rights, but unfamiliar with the U.S. legal system and the issues that will need to be addressed in "defending their rights" greater investment in such educational efforts—including media campaigns on Spanish-language radio, more effective dissemination of existing small handbooks, and support of learning circles of farmworkers in workshops and even ongoing courses of self-study would greatly enhance workers' awareness of their rights and responsibilities. Particular emphasis will need to be given to communicating such information to limited-Spanish indigenous migrants.

Given the housing arrangements observed prevalent in farm labor areas throughout the country, it would be judicious to give particular attention to informational campaigns which engaged small groups of co-workers, friends, housemates, and relatives among the population of unaccompanied male farmworkers using "popular education" methodologies based on self-directed learning circles. Given indigenous communities' strong sense of social networks, projects engaging groups of *paisanos* as peer educators have particular potential. It is relevant to note that, because more than one-quarter of the working teenagers have attended *secundaria* or *preparatoria*, they represent potential resources as peer educators, having quite adequate foundation levels of literacy to be rapidly oriented about the U.S. legal system.

Given the realities of transnational community life such educational efforts should be initiated in sending villages in Mexico and Guatemala at the same time that they are intensified in upstream migrant nodes in the United States. Such a workers' rights campaign, "Get Informed Before You Go North!" would be an appropriate effort to be co-sponsored by the Mexican and U.S. governments as a pilot.

Towards a Binational Approach to Workforce Employment Security

Ultimately, the ongoing economic integration of Mexico and the United States will require thoroughgoing changes in how we conceptualize the process of education, career preparation, and provision of services designed to enhance farmworkers' employment security and economic stability. This will be a complex undertaking because there are so many social institutions that have a role in these processes and so many entrenched interests which will consider new strategies to be threatening. Yet, if the United States and Mexico can move beyond the old paradigm of considering employment policy within the traditional reference framework of purely local, state, and national regulations, statutes, and program designs both countries will reap benefits.

In this closing section, we highlight several of the sorts of issues and options that should be explored in the context of improving transnational migrant teenagers' workforce security.

1. Binational Eligibility for Unemployment Insurance

A workforce such as the U.S. agricultural workforce where more than half of the workers are ineligible to receive unemployment compensation is clearly severely compromised with respect to employment security. A binational policy which genuinely recognized the binational character of the US agricultural workforce would need to address the issue of the binational "portability" of unemployment insurance benefits which are, in principle, part of the guarantees to workers who are employed in the United States.

The status quo, in which unauthorized immigrant farmworkers are deemed ineligible to receive UI because they cannot be legally employed is a perverse Catch-22 which rewards the agricultural employers and labor contractors who have illegally employed these workers with favorable experience modifications (since the workers cannot file claims) and fails to recognize that, beyond the "technical" issue of immigration status, seasonally unemployed farmworkers remain available, willing, and able to accept employment.

While it is not clear what solutions would be politically viable in the context of a legal framework which is oriented toward a national (as opposed to a transnational perspective) on employment, a variety of possibilities would be affordable, rational as investments in human capital development, and valuable as ways to address the structural issues in the current system which favor the employment of unauthorized workers over authorized workers.

However, if the U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission were willing to explore innovative collaboration, one straightforward option would be to allow unemployed Mexican farmworkers who had been employed for a qualifying period of time in the United States but who are not authorized to work in the United States to collect unemployment insurance benefits in Mexico. If there were recognition of the de facto binational labor market, binational employment policy negotiations might focus on "bread and butter" issues, for example, as to whether the level of unemployment compensation received by Mexican workers who had returned to Mexico should be the same entitlement for which they would be eligible under the U.S. system or a lower amount. If there were a bona fide binational approach, consideration might be given, for example, to a policy in which a portion of an eligible transnational migrant farmworker's earning would be earmarked not simply for income replacement but for skills/vocational training in Mexico.

2. Binational Strategies to Deter the Employment of Very Young Teenagers in the US Farm Labor Force

An important finding from our recent research on minors working in agriculture is that there is minimal employment of MSFW dependent children but extensive employment of transnational migrant teenagers. Virtually all these teenage workers were working in violation of U.S. regulations that prohibit full-time employment of school-age youth when school is in session

Our observations suggest that about 15,000 Mexican and Guatemalan teenagers under the age of 16 come north to work as part of th the US farm labor force each year. Our discussions with transnational migrant teenagers in the United States, their parents and relatives, and with their teachers and Mexican school administrators suggest that it is probably not feasible to stop northward migration of teenagers from migrant-sending communities which have become adapted to this economic strategy but that it would quite probably be feasible to deter or delay migration of the 14-15 year old workers until they turned 16—by providing subsidies for continued school attendance. One of the most cost-effective strategies for federal agencies to use in eliminating the illegal employment of minors in US farmwork would, in fact, be to invest in secondary school dropout programs in Mexico.

3. Anytime, Any Place Skills Development Programs for Transnational Migrant Farmworkers

There are a variety of considerations which raise questions about the primacy of 19th century "mass production" oriented instructional designs as the paradigm for learning in the 21st century. These considerations deserve careful attention in the course of efforts to develop the sorts of program policy and service strategies which would have significant impacts on transnational migrants' skills acquisition of the skills they will need to prevail economically in either the developing economy of Mexico or the already-developed economy of the United States. Program designs and service delivery networks truly designed to recognize the importance of lifelong learning in a binational labor market

would provide cost-effective strategies to improve the workforce security of the US farm labor force which will work in the both Mexico and the United States throughout much of their worklives.

Distance-learning technologies have clear-cut applicability but it is not useful to explore in this paper the many possible technologies and strategies which would provide the best mix of learning opportunities for migrants. What should be recognized is that, irrespective of educational program strategy, transnational migrants' learning needs can only be met by programs that support self-directed learning. Over the past decade we have carefully reviewed U.S. approaches to adult learning for migrants (Velarde et al, 1993), Mexican approaches (Sanchez-Jacques, Kissam, and Wrigley, 1996) and worked actively in some initial efforts toward binational collaboration. Our conclusion is that no current program designs or service delivery networks have yet developed designs which actually provides opportunities for continuous, or even intermitten, ongoing learning.

Ironically, the fundamental problem may not be lack of financial resources but, rather, inadequate appreciation of the reality of binational worklives for the rural Mexican and Guatemalan populations who shuttle between agricultural work in the United States and their home villages.

One initial recognition, for example, is the fact that many of the younger transnational migrants coming north to work in U.S. farmwork are, in fact, "target earners" who, in contrast to the stereotypes of workers from peasant economies, actually have high educational aspirations and solid track records of academic achievement—despite their low level of educational attainment. They have not dropped out of school due to lack of interest but due to economic necessity. Many, after a period of working in U.S. agriculture, return to their home villages to pursue further education, as lawyers, teachers, or small business entrepreneurs.

In sending communities in Mexico and Guatemala, systematic consideration of post school dropout support and encouragement for continued learning deserve special attention; in receiving communities in the United States, attention to individualized learning programs which provide a range of learning opportunities to respond to the varying needs of currently-employed MSFW youth. Yet even the most obvious possibilities have not been explored (e.g. intensive ABE/ESL classes during periods when weather or market conditions idle the workforce) because programs do not have the flexibility to escape the old, inappropriate paradigm. While the Mexican government began, in the early 1990's, to offer a variety of programs for Mexicans in the United States, collaboration between these efforts and local service providers were non-existent—perhaps because there was simply no framework to figure out the protocol for collaboration between institutions and programs affiliated with different governmental entities.

4. Binational Collaborative Efforts to Inform Transnational Migrants About U.S. Labor Law

Given the inevitability of migration from many Mexican and Guatemalan rural sending villages to U.S. agriculture, there is no reason why local institutions in sending communities should not provide services to prepare migrants to understand the rights they do have within the framework of the U.S. legal system. Legal service providers from the United States have, from time to time, provided workshops and seminars in some sending villages on an informal basis but there has never been an organized effort to educate workers about their rights. The recent binational collaboration which led to the Mexican government's Office for Mexicans Abroad's provision of survival kits to northbound migrants (financed in part by a U.S. foundation) as part of an effort to decrease the numbers of deaths in the U.S. desert is the kind of bold and innovative strategy that is needed. Similar efforts in preparing migrants with the knowledge and problem-solving skills they needed to protect their rights in the United States (e.g. understanding of how the piece rate payment system is related to minimum wage provisions, the functioning of Workers' Compensation insurance) would be justified.

5. Education and Employment Training Components in Efforts to Link Remittances and Public Investment in Rural Development in Migrant-Sending Areas

There is currently a great deal of interest in ways in which migrants' remittances to their villages of origin can be combined with public investments to spur small business development and, thereby, create jobs in rural areas of Mexico. Current research by the UCLA Center for North American Integration and Development is well targeted in its focus on the role hometown associations and other existing binational associations in the civic/non-profit sector can play in pursuing this strategy. This strategy, first articulated by The Commission for the Study of International Migration, and Cooperative Development in 1990, remains a valuable one today.[30]

One of the benefits of focusing on hometown associations as a type of institution for binational collaboration is that this strategy facilitates working on a manageable regional scale—since these organizations are configured to match the actual shape of the networks that have given rise to them. This means that smaller, pilot and demonstration projects can be developed, tested, and refined before large-scale interventions are set in motion.

Within the context of farm labor policy, these sorts of organizations can play a valuable role—particularly if part of project design is to find ways to make educational and employment training components an integral part of the overall economic development effort. In this sort of model, workshops on workers' rights within the U.S. legal framework could be provided both in sending villages and migrant-receiving communities in the U.S. with corresponding workshops on small business development,

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[30] **Unauthorized Migration: An Economic Development Response**, July, 1990.

career alternatives, effective teamwork and collaboration, could be offered both sending and receiving areas also.[31]

Conclusion

In this paper, we have reviewed the rationale for moving to address issues of agricultural workforce security within a binational framework, highlighted some of the most striking divergences between traditional views of the farm labor force and the reality of a binational labor force, and reviewed some of the possible strategies that could be used to more closely align national and binational policy and program planning with the contemporary reality of a binational labor market.

We understand that there are conceptual and institutional constraints on developing an immediate action framework for policy and program planning. Yet the fact that these constraints are real and that strategies to overcome them are inevitably part of an effective policy and program response does not mean that we have the luxury of further delay in initiating dialogue about what to do, how to do it, and how fast there can be forward progress. Whether or not policymakers and program planners initiate dialogue this year or in future years, the divergence between the assumptions which form the basis of both U.S. and Mexican educational and social programs will continue to diverge from the realities of the post-NAFTA era. In actuality, the stated objectives of the Binational Commission have been primarily to initiate dialogue—whether or not it would be easy to achieve consensus in many of the difficult areas such dialogue needs to address.

Our own sense is that the initial priority should be to explore the possibilities of working collaboratively to address the problems faced by teenage transnational migrants who are coming, and will continue to come, in a steady stream from migrant-sending areas of Mexico to work in the U.S. farm labor market. Social and educational program investments in developing the support services which respond effectively to the educational, skills development, and career planning needs of these youth hold out the promise of having the most positive cost/benefit ratios and, there is clearly a binational consensus that, even if we cannot agree upon the best approaches to addressing the problems faced by adults who are transnational migrants, we can at least agree that adolescents deserve special attention. Investments in education, employment training, and enhancing workers' ability to protect their rights as workers are critical since these can do a great deal more by preventing underemployment, unemployment, and personally-wrenching movement from job to job more than costly programs to provide support services for workers and their families who seek to survive in an environment of chronic, involuntary unemployment.

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[31] Organizations such as the Centro Binacional para el Desarollo Indigena Oaxaqueño are already beginning to think about binational health promotion campaigns and similar strategies could be used in other areas of adult learning

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